

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 679 without my signature.

This bill requires the State Park and Recreation Commission (Commission) to certify that all requests to dispose of, or change the use of, any land in the State Park system for anything other than park purposes, be accompanied by substitute property that is subject to specific requirements.

This bill is duplicative of existing statute and significantly reduces the state's ability to effectively manage the State Park system.

Under existing law, the Director of Parks, through an extensive process with the Department of General Services and the State Public Works Board, may sell, exchange, and acquire State Park property deemed necessary for the extension, improvement, or development of the State Park system. Whether it is roads, water and energy infrastructure, or areas necessary for the installation of renewable energy facilities, maintaining the flexibility of the current process is absolutely necessary as the state continues to strive to meet its infrastructure needs for a growing population.

Additionally, although we all shuttered with displeasure at the potential impacts, the Legislature passed and I signed a budget that has major impacts on our state park system. While I was able to keep all of our state parks open in the current fiscal year, we cannot ignore the fact that there are significant costs associated with running this system for the benefit of the public. In times of fiscal crisis, we must be able to balance the costs and benefits of our park system with the costs and benefits of other important government programs. This proposal would limit our ability to do so.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger